

*City of Alexandria, Virginia***MEMORANDUM**

DATE: MAY 9, 2001

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: THE FY 2000 ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE ALEXANDRIA
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY COMMISSION

ISSUE: City Council consideration of the FY 2000 Annual Report from the Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council receive the FY 2000 Annual Report from the Environmental Policy Commission and thank the Commission members for their efforts on behalf of the City.

DISCUSSION: The Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission (EPC) is an advisory body comprised of fifteen citizen members appointed by City Council to provide advice and make recommendations to City Council and, where appropriate, to the Planning Commission and the City Manager on issues relating to clean air, land use, noise pollution and abatement, pesticides, herbicides and contaminants, solid waste, water quality and supply, other topics relating to conservation and protection of environmental conditions, and other such matters referred to the Commission by City Council. The EPC is staffed by the Transportation and Environmental Services Division of Environmental Quality.

The EPC prepared a report which highlights of the principal activities of the EPC for FY 2000 (July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2000). Highlights of the Commission's work for FY 2000 include:

- Working closely with the Planning Commission and the public to finalize amendments to the City's Master Plan to ensure compliance with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act.
- Taking the leadership role in working with other boards and commission, citizens and civic groups in identifying and prioritizing environmental/quality of life issues, e.g., establishing a liaison with the Archaeological Commission and tracking issues before the Park and Recreation Commission.

- Evaluating and, where appropriate, submitting recommendations to the City Council on issues ranging from traffic reduction/environmental quality improvement initiatives to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project.
- Continuing to support the annual Earth Day event during FY 2000 in conjunction with the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities, the Virginia Cooperative Extension, 4H and Alexandria Volunteer Bureau.
- Submitting a number of resolutions covering topics such as tax credits for telecommuting, straightening of route one, and adoption of the Water Quality Supplement to the Master Plan (see attached report).

FISCAL IMPACT: None

ATTACHMENT: Environmental Policy Commission Annual Report for FY 2000

STAFF: William J. Skrabak, Division Chief, Environmental Quality
Richard J. Baier, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services
Rose Boyd, Director, Citizen Assistance



Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission

Fiscal Year 2000 Annual Report

July 1, 1999 - June 30, 2000

Kerry J. Donley, Mayor
William C. Cleveland, Vice Mayor
Claire M. Eberwein, Councilwoman
William D. Euille, Councilman
Redella S. Pepper, Councilwoman
David G. Speck, Councilman
Joyce Woodson, Councilwoman
Phil Sunderland, City Manager

1. Introduction

The Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission (EPC) was established under Chapter 4, Article M, of the City Code to “advise and make recommendations to the City Council and, where appropriate, to the Planning Commission and City Manager.” A summary of EPC’s activities during Fiscal Year 2000 (FY2000) is presented below. This report also includes background information on the EPC and the makeup of the commission’s membership.

2. Fiscal Year 2000 Commission Highlights

During FY2000, the EPC worked with other city commissions and groups to address water quality and other issues confronting the City and to increase the visibility and importance of environmental issues to city residents. The EPC also evaluated and, where appropriate, submitted recommendations to the City Council, on issues ranging from traffic reduction/environmental quality improvement initiatives to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project. Highlights of these activities during FY2000 are provided in Sections 2.1 - 2.4, below.

2.1 Water Quality Management Supplement to the City of Alexandria Master Plan

During FY2000, the EPC worked closely with the Planning Commission to finalize amendments to the City’s Master Plan to ensure compliance with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act.

On February 1, 2000, the Planning Commission held a public hearing to consider an amendment to the City’s Master Plan to add a new chapter titled “Water Quality Management Supplement.” Following the testimony of eight speakers, the Planning Commission referred the issue back to the EPC for consideration of additional comments and evaluation of additional changes to the draft supplement.

On June 19, 2000, the EPC held a Public Information Meeting on the Water Quality Management Supplement and invited the public to provide additional comments on the supplement at the meeting. The EPC evaluated the public comments presented at this meeting, as well as additional written comments, and incorporated the comments, where appropriate, into a revised version of the proposed supplement.

2.2 Earth Day

The EPC founded Alexandria’s Earth Day celebration in 1996 and continued to support this annual event during FY2000. The EPC co-sponsored the 2000 Earth Day with the Alexandria Office of Special Events; the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities; the Virginia Cooperative Extension; 4H; and the Alexandria Volunteer Bureau. Commission members drafted articles for Earth Day’s environmental almanac and sponsored and manned an Earth Day booth.

2.3 Commission Resolutions and Other Actions

The EPC approved the following resolutions and other actions during FY2000:

- The EPC submitted to the City Council a resolution that the City request the Virginia State Legislature to explore the use of tax credits and other incentives for employees and individuals to encourage telecommuting, as well as other means of achieving these goals. The EPC’s resolution recognized that cities are struggling to improve quality of life through clean air, reduced traffic congestion, and increased employment options. The EPC recognized that telecommuting was one

option to achieve these goals, and that telecommuting provided an incentive for environmentally positive behavior and reduced road construction costs.

- The EPC submitted to the City Council a resolution supporting the straightening of Route 1 at the Monroe Avenue Bridge. The EPC's resolution recognized that straightening Route 1 would reduce traffic problems, connect the proposed Potomac Yard Park/bike path with the expanded Simpson Field recreation area, and consolidate recreational open space west of Route 1 with Simpson Field.
- The EPC submitted to LCOR, the developer of the planned U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in the City, recommendations on incorporating "green building" design measures, and copied the City Council and Planning Commission on these recommendations.
- The EPC recommended that the City of Alexandria Planning Commission and City Council adopt Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act Amendments to the City's Master Plan (discussed in greater detail in Section 2.1, above).

2.4 Other Commission Activities

The EPC also met with other city organizations and with businesses to evaluate the environmental issues associated with a variety of projects in the City. These activities are summarized below.

- The EPC continued to evaluate Woodrow Wilson Bridge and associated urban deck options.
- The EPC reviewed the City's evaluation of the water quality at the Oronoco Street Outfall and the City's application to the Commonwealth of Virginia to enter Virginia's Voluntary Remediation Program.
- The EPC members participated in the Open Space subcommittees on both the Planning Commission and the Parks and Recreation Commission.
- The EPC met with LCOR regarding development of land for the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, and reviewed the development company's assumptions regarding traffic and plans to accommodate the increase in commuters in the area.

3. Fiscal Year 2001 Commission Goals

The EPC has set the following goals for FY 2001:

- Improve attendance at Earth Day
- Work with City Council to approve the Water Quality Supplement to the Master Plan by December 2000
- Hold a retreat to focus on EPC roles and responsibilities
- Increase EPC member involvement and assign responsibilities to individual EPC members

4. Environmental Policy Commission Background

The Alexandria City Council established the EPC in 1970 to advise and make recommendations to the City Council and City Manager, where appropriate, on matters relating to the following:

- Clean air
- Land use
- Noise pollution and abatement
- Pesticides, herbicides, and contaminants
- Solid waste
- Water quality and supply
- Other topics relating to the conservation and protection of environmental conditions in the City of Alexandria
- Other matters referred to the EPC by the City Council

The EPC consists of 15 members, and is supported by the City of Alexandria Transportation and Environmental Services Department. The EPC is comprised of the following:

- One lawyer with experience in Federal or State environmental statutes, regulations, and procedures
- One member from the field of sanitary engineering
- One member from the field of intergovernmental relations
- One member from the field of urban planning
- One member from the field of ecology
- Two members from the field of environmental science
- One member designated by the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce
- Five citizen-at-large members
- One student attending high school in the City of Alexandria

5. Environmental Policy Commission Members During Fiscal Year 2000

Environmental Policy Commission members during the last fiscal year, and their role in the commission, included the following:

- Ross Bell, Citizen Member
- Lisa Edouard, Field of Ecology Representative
- Cynthia Chambers, Citizen Member
- Sam Cole, Field of Engineering Representative
- Tom Fryer, Citizen Member
- Kenyon Larson (Secretary), Field of Environmental Sciences Representative
- Douglas MacMillan, Intergovernmental Relations Representative
- Jeffrey Mosher, Sanitary/Environmental Representative
- Nancy Pomerleau (First Vice Chair), Field of Environmental Sciences Representative
- Paula Potoczak, Citizen Member
- Edward Raynolds (Second Vice Chair), Citizen Member
- Molly Theobald, Field of Urban Planning Representative
- Tom Tyler (Chair), Field of Law Member
- Donald Zdancewicz, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce Representative

The student representative position on the EPC was vacant during FY2000.